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THE *ANTIGONE* OF SOPHOCLES ADAPTED FOR SCHOOLS

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The following one-act adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone*, as produced by the pupils of the Trenton high school, follows as closely as possible the spirit, if not the exact text and stage arrangements, of the original. An ordinary stage with scenery showing open country, and exits up stage R. and L., is all that is needed. Costumes of principals may be rented; the others can easily be made. The text, as published by Walter H. Baker & Co., Boston, Mass., and the libretto accompanying the music of Mendelssohn's opera based on this play, published by Novello & Co., New York, have been freely condensed, rearranged, and rewritten. The orchestration is published by Breitkopf & Hortal, New York. Directions for adapting the score will be furnished on application. The notes which follow the text may aid in reading the piano score and in interpreting the choruses, the lines, and the essentials of the action. The production entire should occupy about forty-five minutes.

THE *ANTIGONE* OF SOPHOCLES

<i>Antigone</i>	. . . . .	Daughter of Oedipus
<i>Ismene</i>	. . . . .	Sister of Antigone
<i>Creon</i>	. . . . .	King of Thebes
<i>Haemon</i>	. . . . .	Son of Creon
<i>Tiresias</i>	. . . . .	A Prophet
<i>Guard I</i>		
<i>Guard II</i>		
<i>Chorus Leader</i>		
<i>Chorus of Theban Maidens</i>		

PLACE: *The country about Thebes.*

TIME: *About 440 B.C., a summer midday.*

(1) OVERTURE

- (2) *Ant.*: O my dear sister, Is there an evil
By the wrath of Jove we have not felt already?
All that's distressful hath been ours; and now

This dreadful edict from the tyrant comes
To double our misfortunes. Hast thou heard
What harsh commands he hath imposed on all?

Is.: Since that unhappy day, Antigone,
When by each other's hand our brothers fell,
I've heard naught that could joy or grief bestow.

Ant.: I thought thou wert a stranger to the tidings,
And therefore called thee forth, that here alone
I might impart them to thee.

Is.: O! What are they? (*Rises.*)

For something dreadful labors in thy breast.

Ant.: Know, then, from Creon, our indulgent lord,
Our hapless brothers met a different fate;
To honor one, and one to infamy,
He hath consigned; with funeral rites he graced
The body of our dear Eteocles,
While Polynices' wretched carcass he,
Unburied, unlamented, left exposed,
A feast for hungry vultures on the plain.
No pitying friend will dare to violate
The tyrant's harsh command, for public death
Awaits the offender! Creon comes himself
To tell us of it; such is our condition.
This is the crisis, this the hour, Ismene,
That must declare thee worthy of thy birth,
Or show thee mean, base, and degenerate.

Is.: What wouldst thou have me do?

Defy his power? Condemn the laws?

Ant.: To act with me, or not; consider, and resolve.

Is.: What daring deed wouldst thou attempt? What is it?
Speak!

Ant.: To join and take the body, my Ismene.

Is.: Ha! And wouldst thou dare to bury it, when thus we
are forbidden?

Ant.: Ay, to bury him; he is my brother, and thine, too,
Ismene!

Is.: Hath not the king pronounced it death to all?

- Ant.:* He hath no right, no power to keep me from my own.
- Is.:* Alas! Remember our unhappy father's fate;
Oppressed with shame and infamy, he died.
What from our disobedience can we hope
But misery and ruin? Poor, weak women, we!
Therefore to this, and worse than this, my sister, we
must submit.
- Ant.:* Act as thou wilt; I'll bury him myself;
Let me perform but that, and death is welcome.
- Is.:* Alas! I tremble for thee.
- Ant.:* Tremble for thyself, and not for me.
- Is.:* O! do not tell thy purpose;
I beg thee, do not! I shall ne'er betray thee.
- Ant.:* I'd have it known. I know my duty,
And I'll pay it there where 'twill be best accepted.
(*Starts to go.*)
- Is.:* It cannot be; 'tis folly to attempt it. (*Tries to detain her.*)
- Ant.:* Go on, and I shall hate thee! Our dear brother,
He, too, shall hate thee as his bitterest foe.
Go. Leave me there to suffer for my rashness.
- Is.:* Go. Do thy purpose though it be unwise.
It proves the deep devotion of thy love. (*Exeunt R.*)
(3) (*Enter Creon L. and Chorus L.*)
- (4) *Cho.:* Orb of Helios, thou whose light, over Thebes's sev'ngated
walls
Never shone so intensely bright, all hail; eye of the
golden day, hail.
Sublimely thou soarest, o'er Dirce's current thy beam
thou pourest.
Thy pow'r smote his bright silver shields, who left Argos
in proud array.
Back, with keen urging lash, thou didst his war dash,
defeated, affrighted.
- Creon:* At length, our empire, shook by civil broils
The gods to peace and safety have restored.
'Tis my firm thought, and I have held it ever,

That he who rules, and doth not follow that
 Which wisdom counsels, must be the worst of men.
 So therefore have I sent my edict forth
 That they should bury him who nobly fought
 And died for Thebes—the good Eteocles.
 For Polynices, thirsting for a brother's blood,
 I have decreed he lie unburied, his vile carcass to the
 birds a prey.

Cho. Leader:

Son of Menoeceus, thine is the power
 O'er all supreme, the living and the dead.

Creon: Be careful, then, my orders are obeyed.
 I have appointed some to watch the body.

Cho. Leader:

What, then, remains for us?

Creon: To see that none, by your connivance, violate the law.
 (*Enter Guard I R. Kneels, hands extended.*)

Guard I: O, King, it was not I, nor have I seen the man who did
 the deed.

Creon: What, man?

Guard I: The body of Polynices, some rash hand
 Hath buried, scattered o'er his corse the dust,
 And funeral rites performed.

Creon: Who dared do this? (*To Chorus*)

Guard I: 'Tis yet unknown.

No tomb was raised; light lay the scattered earth,
 Nor could we trace the steps of dog or beast.
 The guards accused each other, and all declared
 Their solemn oath they knew not of the deed.
 At length one guard proposed that all should be
 To thee discovered: and 'twas my lot
 To pour the news, unwilling, into ears
 Unwilling to receive it; for I know
 None ever loved the messenger of ill.

Cho. Leader (to Creon):

To me it seems as if the hand of heaven were in the deed.

Creon: Be silent, ere my rage pronounce thee fool.
But well I know, the murmuring citizens
Who would not bend beneath my yoke, by hire
Corrupted, have dared the venturous deed. But mark
(*To Guard.*)

Almighty Jove, if to my eyes you do not bring
The traitor, know, death itself shall not suffice
To glut my vengeance.

Guard I: My lord, I did not do it.

Creon: Thou hast sold thy life for gain.

Guard I: 'Tis cruel to suspect me.

Creon: Thou talk'st it bravely; but remember all
Unless you do produce him, you shall find
The miseries which on ill-got wealth await.

Guard I: Would he were found! That must we leave to fate.
(*Stands L.*)

(5) (*Enter Antigone and Guard II R.*)

(6) *Cho:* Amazement! Do the powers of Olympus deceive my
senses?

I know, yet fain would deny, that I now behold Antigone
here,

Miserable child of a wretched father, of Oedipus. Ah!
what means this?

Say, can it be that thou hast dared to infringe thus the
Monarch's

Command; can it be that thou art the offender?

(7) *Guard II:*

It is she, 'tis she who hath buried the corpse.

Unaided, she inter'd it.

Creon: Whom have we here? (*Rises.*) Doth Justice smile
on us?

Guard II: Oh, my Lord, bound by that duty which we owe to thee
And to our country, we bring here this virgin;
Whom, as she sprinkled o'er her brother's dust
The varied wreath, we seized. Henceforth we stand
acquitted.

Creon: Art thou sure 'twas she?

Guard II: These eyes beheld her. With careful hands
 From off the carcass we removed the scattered dust.
 Then to a hill retired; there watched at distance till the
 midday sun
 Scorched o'er our heads, when we beheld this virgin
 Issuing forth, and heard her cries distressful
 When upon her brother's corse she cast her eyes;
 Loud shrieked, and cursed the hand that did the impious
 deed;
 Then sprinkled o'er the crumbled earth; and from a
 brazen urn
 Her due libations poured. We saw, and straight
 Pursued her; unappalled she seemed, and still,
 As we did question her, confessed it all.

Creon (to Antigone):

Speak, thou who bend'st to earth thy drooping head.
 Dost thou deny the fact?

Ant. (defiantly):

Deny it? No.

Creon (to Guard II):

Retire, for thou art free. (*Exit Guard II R.*)

(*To Ant.*)

And now be brief and tell me, heard'st thou our decree?

(*Sits.*)

Ant.: I did. 'Twas public; how could I avoid it?

Creon: And dar'st thou, then, to disobey the law?

Ant.: I dare. Believe me, King, 'tis happiness to die.

Without remorse I shall embrace my fate.

But to my brother had I left my rites

Of sepulture unpaid, I then, indeed,

Had been most wretched.

Creon (to Chorus):

This proud offender, not content, it seems,

To violate my laws, adds crime to crime,

Smiles at my threats, and glories in her guilt.

If I should suffer her to 'scape my vengeance,

She were the man, not I. Her sister, too, I find
Accomplice in the deed. Go, call her forth. (*To*
Guard I.)

(*Exit* Guard I R.)

Ant.: I am thy captive, thou wouldst have my life;
Will that content thee?

Creon: Yes, 'tis all I wish.

Ant.: Why this delay? I cannot live to do
A deed more glorious.

Creon: Dost thou not blush?

Ant.: For what? Why blush to pay a sister's duty?
My love shall go with him, but not my hate.

Creon: To Hades, then, and love him.
While I exist, no woman shall control me.

(8) (*Enter* Ismene and Guard I R.)

Cho.: See, from the gates Ismene comes; the tears she sheds
express
A sister's love; the cloud of sorrow lowers o'er her brow;
How faded is the luster of her cheek.

Creon (*to* Ismene):

Come forth. What say'st thou? Wert thou accomplice
in the deed,

Or wilt thou swear that thou are innocent?

Is. (*stands forth*):

I do acknowledge it, if she permit me;

I was accomplice, and the crime was mine.

(*Antigone steps toward her angrily. Guard makes an instinctive*
movement toward her.)

Ant.: 'Tis false. Thou didst refuse, nor would I hold com-
munion with thee.

Is.: Antigone! Do not despise me. I but ask to die
With thee, and pay due honors to the dead.

Ant.: Pretend not to a merit thou hast not.
Live thou! It is enough for me to die.

Is.: And will you not permit me, then, to share your fate?

Ant.: Thy choice was life: 'tis mine to die.

Creon: Both seem deprived of reason; one, indeed, was ever thus.

Is.: O King, the mind doth seldom keep her seat when sunk
Beneath misfortunes. Wouldst thou then destroy thy
son's

Long destined wife?

Creon: I'll not wed my son to so base a woman.

Ant.: O my dearest Haemon, and is it thus thy father doth
disgrace thee?

Creon: Such an alliance were as hateful to me as is thyself.

Is.: Wilt thou, then, take her from him?

Creon: Their nuptials shall be finished by death. Go, take
them hence;

Confine them both. Henceforth they shall not stir,

For even the boldest will essay to fly from the approach
of Death.

9) (*Exeunt Ant., Is., and Guard I R. Enter Haemon R. who
kneels before Creon and Guard II.*)

Cho.: See, Haemon appears, the last verdant shoot that sprang
from thy root.

Shedding bitter tears, he laments his betrothed Antigone.

Ah, is she fated by destiny ne'er to crown his affections?

Creon: My son, com'st thou, well knowing our decree, to mourn
Thy promised bride, and angry to dispute a father's will?

Hae.: My father, I am thine, do thou command,
And I in all things shall obey. 'Tis fit
My promised nuptial rites give place to thee.

Creon: It will become thee with obedience thus

To bear thee ever, and every act

To yield submissive to a father's will.

Hate, then, thy bitterest foe, despise her arts,

And leave her to be wedded to the tomb.

Hae. (rises):

What thy judgment deems only bids me

To tell thee, then, what I of late have heard

In secret whispered. Your afflicted people

United mourn the unhappy virgin's fate

Unmerited. Most wretched of her sex,

To die for deeds of such distinguished virtue.

Oh, do not, then, retain thy will and still believe
No sense but thine can judge aright.
Then mitigate thy wrath, my father,
And give way to sweet repentance.

Creon: And have we lived so long, then, to be taught,
At last, our duty by a boy like thee?

Hae.: Young though I am, I still may judge aright;
Wisdom in action lies, and not in years.

Creon (to Chorus):

He pleads the woman's cause. It is a crime
To guard my throne and rights from violation?

Hae.: He cannot guard them who condemns the gods and
violates their laws.

Creon: Oh! Thou art worse, more impious, even, than she thou
hast defended?

Hae.: Naught have I done to merit this reproof.

Creon: Hast thou not pleaded for her?

Hae.: No, for thee and for myself; for the eternal gods.

Creon: Then know she shall not live to be thy wife.

Hae.: Then she must die; another, too, may fail.

Creon (arises):

Ha! dost thou threaten me, audacious traitor?

Hae.: What are my threats?

Creon: Now by Olympus here,
I swear thy vile reproaches shall not pass
Unpunished. (*To Guard II*) Call her forth. Before her
bridegroom
She shall be brought, and perish in his sight.
(*Exit Guard II R.*)

Hae.: These eyes shall never see it. Let the slaves
Who fear thy rage, submit to it; but know,
'Tis the last time thou shalt behold thy son.
(*Exit Hae. R.*)

Creon: Well, let him go; be it as it may,
Death is their portion, and he shall not save them.

Cho. Leader:

Must they both die, then?

Creon: No; 'tis well advised.

Ismene lives; but for Antigone,—

Cho. Leader:

O King! What death is she decreed to suffer?

Creon: Far from the hands of men I'll have her led,
And in a rocky cave beneath the earth
There let her pray the only God she worships
To save her from this death. Perchance she may
At last perceive where reverence is due.

(*Exit Creon L.*)

(10) (*Enter Ant. and Guard II R.*)

Cho.: O, heart-rending sight, what emotions rise;
My sorrow is greater than words can relate;
It flows from my bosom in streams to my ears,
Thus beholding fair Antigone's fate urge her on to the
doom of all mortals.

(11) *Ant. (seats herself):*

Behold me now, my native citizens, treading the
Pathway to my father's home. My last bright beams,
Of golden Helios, will set forever. Death leads me on
To Acheron, whose dismal stream I cross to peaceful
Hades:

There I soon shall rest. Hymen's hymn never there
will sound.

There no bridal chorus ever will greet me; I am
betrothed to Acheron.

(12) *Cho.:* Her sons were gods, a goddess was she, our fathers were
mortal;

Mortal are we. Remember, how gloriously great it
will be

To share the fate of immortals.

(13) *Ant.:* Deride me not. Gods of my fathers, see! They insult
me while I

Stand upon the verge of death. I call ye all to witness,
how,

Unmourned, unwept by friends, and by what laws
condemn'd,

I go to linger in the hollow rock, where I must die.
Not a tear, not a friend, all alone, I must go to the
gloomy
Shades below. Thou bright beam of day, ever glorious
ray,
I never shall see thee again. Alas, I look for pity, but
in vain. (*Sinks to ground.*)

(14) (*Enter Creon L.*)

Creon: Lean not on Hope; what I have will'd is fixed, and now
shall be fulfilled.

(*Exeunt Ant. and Guard II R. during following dirge.*)

(15) *Cho.:* Sweet tender flower, born for an hour, now by Death's
cold hand stricken.

Sweet tender flower, born for an hour, now by Death's
cold hand stricken,

Ne'er shall thy voice laugh and rejoice, ne'er shall thy
life blood quicken.

Sleep, gentle child, pure, undefiled; weeping, to dust we
yield thee;

Sleep, gentle child, pure, undefiled; weeping, to dust we
yield thee.

Hushed are thy cries, closed are thine eyes, peace now
forever shield thee.

(16) (*Enter Tiresias and Guard I L.*)

Tir.: King of Thebes, behold, conducted hither
By my gentle guide, Tiresias comes.

Creon: O venerable prophet. What hast thou to impart?
(*Leads him to seat.*)

Tir.: I will inform thee, therefore be wise, for know,
This very hour is the important crisis of thy fate.

Creon (starts):

Speak, then, what is it? How I dread thy words!
(*Aside.*)

Tir.: Know, then, that sitting on my ancient throne
Sudden a strange unusual noise was heard
Of birds, whose loud and barb'rous dissonance
I knew not how to interpret. Amazed and fearful,

Instantly I tried, on burning altars, holy sacrifice.
Then mark me well. I learned from thee doth evil flow
From thy unjust decree. Consider this, my son.
And, O remember, to err is human, and he alone
Is wise and happy, who, when ills are done,
Persists not, but would heal the wound he made.

Creon: I know, old man, I am the general mark,
The butt of all. But learn from me, that never
Shall I buy a tomb for Polynices.

Tir.: Thus doth the tyrant heed not wisdom's ways.

Creon: Know'st thou 'tis a king thou'rt talking thus to?

Tir.: Thou wilt oblige me, then, to utter that which I had
Purposed to conceal?

Creon: Speak out; say what thou wilt.

Tir.: Not many days shall the bright sun perform
His stated course ere thou, too, shalt weep,
For that thy cruel sentence decreed a guiltless
Virgin to the tomb, and kept on earth unburied,
An unhallowed corse, which not to thee of right belonged.
The ministers of death have spread the snare,
And with like woes await to punish thee.

Now, boy, conduct me home. (*Starts toward exit.*)

(*Exeunt Tir. and Guard I L. Silence for a moment.*)

Cho. Leader:

He's gone; and dreadful were his prophecies.

(*To Creon*) Son of Menoeceus, now thou need'st most
counsel.

Creon: What wouldst thou advise? I will obey thee.

Cho. Leader:

Set the virgin free, and let a tomb be raised for Polynices.

Creon: And dost thou counsel this? O must I yield?

Cho. Leader:

Immediately, O King, for vengeance falls
With hasty footsteps on the guilty head.

Creon: I must reverse the sentence; and do you,
Quick, hasten to the place: myself will go,
And the same hand that bound shall set her free.

I see, that justice which the gods uphold,
Should ever be the highest aim of life.

(*Exit Creon L. Enter Guard II R.*)

Guard II: They are dead; and those who live, the dreadful cause.

Cho. Leader:

Quick, tell us who the slayer and the slain.

(*Chorus gathers around him.*)

Guard II: Haemon is dead.

Cho. Leader:

Dead! by what hand, his father's or his own?

Guard II: Enraged, and grieving for his murdered love, he slew himself.

Cho. Leader:

O prophet, thy prediction were too true.

(*Enter Creon L.*)

(17) *Cho.:* Our monarch appears, see the burden he bears.

In his heart he enfolds Death's fatal token—

The death of his son. The deed is his own,

If freely the truth may be spoken.

Creon: Ah, me, behold the dire result of rigor;
Which thus hath caused the death of life I gave.
My errors are my curse, my son, my son,
Doomed to untimely death.

(*Enter Guard I R.*)

(18) *Guard I. (Kneels):*

Thus oppressed, my lord, with bitterest

Misfortune, more affliction awaits thee still,

Which thou shalt find within. The Queen is dead,

Her wounds yet fresh. Eager, alas, to show

A mother's love, she followed her lost child.

Creon. (Rises; hands upraised):

Alas, O new calamity, what more

Of ill hath Fate in store for me?

Ah, wretched mother, hapless child,

I shudder at the thought! Will no one pierce me with a
two-edged sword?

Surrounded by inextricable ills, plunged deep in sorrow,
Ye behold me now. (*To Chorus.*)

Guard I: Dying, she charged thee with her children's death.

Creon: Say, in what manner did she cease to live?

Guard I: Her own hand struck the weapon to her heart,
When she received the news of Haemon's death,
And of Antigone's.

Creon: O, woe to me, on me alone, the weight of these disasters
falls,
The crime is mine; for I it was who caused their death;
I murdered them. I, only. Come hither, come. (*To
Guards.*)

(*Sinks to ground. Guards catch and support him.*)

(19) *Cho.:* 'Tis Wisdom that sees the way to be blest;
To revere the decrees ordained by the deities,
Ever is best. All the strokes of injustice, most justly
rebound,
All the strokes of injustice, most justly rebound;
recoiling,
They wound. When erring men, corrected, grow sage,
their Wisdom
Crowns their age.

(*Moving off R. repeat: "All the strokes," etc.*)

(*Curtain*)

NOTES

1. Play the entire overture, pp. 1-5, raising the curtain at the second brace on p. 5. *Antigone* and *Ismene* are discovered, *Ismene* seated on a mound.

2. This dialogue should clearly and sharply bring out the contrasting characters of the two sisters, and the immediate issue of the play. *Antigone* goes out defiantly; *Ismene* follows her reluctantly.

3. The chorus, numbering from twenty to forty, and equally divided as to sopranos and altos, should enter simultaneously R. and L., marching down stage, circling in some conventional fashion, and, finally, on the entrance of *Creon* near the end of their song, group themselves R.

(The choruses, of course, are written for male voices, and boys should be used if possible. But the score is well adapted for female voices in unison or two-part form.) The chorus should be carefully trained to help interpret the

lines and action of the principals by simultaneous gesture, facial expression, and quick, sharp attack on their recitative passages.

4. The opening chorus should be begun off stage, to carry the impression of distance, and repeated while marching on and until *Creon* enters and seats himself. Use the score from p. 6 to the end of the second brace on p. 7. It should be sung in strict time, with much dignity, retarding only the last two measures. The word "dash" may be held. The chorus should always sing with faces and gesture R. or L. as the principals enter, turning as they come down stage. The *Chorus Leader* should stand in front of the others when addressing *Creon*. The *Chorus* should reinforce her action in every possible way.

5. On the *Guards'* last word "fate," *Guard II* should enter quickly with *Antigone*, thrusting her before *Creon*, where she stands dejectedly.

6. The *Chorus* should sing recitative pp. 28-29, in strict adherence to the indications on the score, with much dramatic fervor. The word "be" at the top of p. 29 should be held. Sing the rest of the page staccato.

7. The *Guard II* should utter his next lines strictly between the chords of the next passage.

8. The *Chorus Leader* should recite her lines "See, from the gates . . ." in monotone, accenting her words with the notes of the music. Considerable drill should be given to this so as to get an accurate and sympathetic interpretation. *Ismene* is led in slowly in time to the music.

The *Chorus* augments their *Leader* with corresponding gesture, exchanging looks among themselves.

9. Play the piano score at the top of p. 42 as an accompaniment to the exit of *Antigone* and *Ismene*. *Haemon* enters as the *Chorus* begins to sing. He remains kneeling before his father until they finish the passage. Hold the last two syllables of "affection." Play the rest of the piano score at the bottom of p. 43.

10. *Antigone* is led slowly on to the music at the top of p. 47, the singing beginning as she seats herself.

11. *Antigone's* reply, p. 48, should be uttered in monotone in exact accord with the music. It ends in the second measure, last brace on that page.

12. The *Chorus'* reply begins on p. 50, as indicated. The last two syllables of "immortals" should be held.

13. *Antigone's* reply following on p. 51 should be very staccato. She continues on p. 54 to the bottom of that page.

14. *Creon* enters on chords struck in last brace, bottom of page 55. His lines "Lean not on Hope . . ." are uttered at the end of that brace.

15. *Antigone* is led slowly out by *Guard II* to the music of "Sweet tender flower," from *The Daughter of Jairus* by Stainer, published by Ditson or Schirmer, New York. It is sung unaccompanied by the *Chorus*. Care should be taken that the *Chorus* does not flat in changing from the pianissimo passages.

16. *Tiresias* is led in because he is old and blind. He enters at the close of the piano score played from the last two braces on p. 65.

17. *Creon* enters slowly on opening music, p. 83, and sinks to seat in despair. *Chorus* returns to its former place. Music continues on p. 84 and goes to opening chord in the first measure of the second brace, p. 85. *Creon* should be drilled to utter all his lines through these recitative passages with great exactness of phrasing and dramatic fervor.

18. *Guard I* enters during piano accompaniment top of p. 87. *Creon* and *Guard I* continue using lines as indicated in the text, to the music on pp. 87 and 88, ending at end of fourth brace, p. 88. There is a general consternation and movement among the *Chorus*. After a pause, the piano score at the top of p. 91 is played while the *Chorus* takes places for departure.

19. The final chorus, running from p. 91 to the bottom of p. 93, may be sung at least twice as they go out, giving the effect of distance. The curtain goes down on *Creon* supported by the *Guards*, who are overcome with grief.